

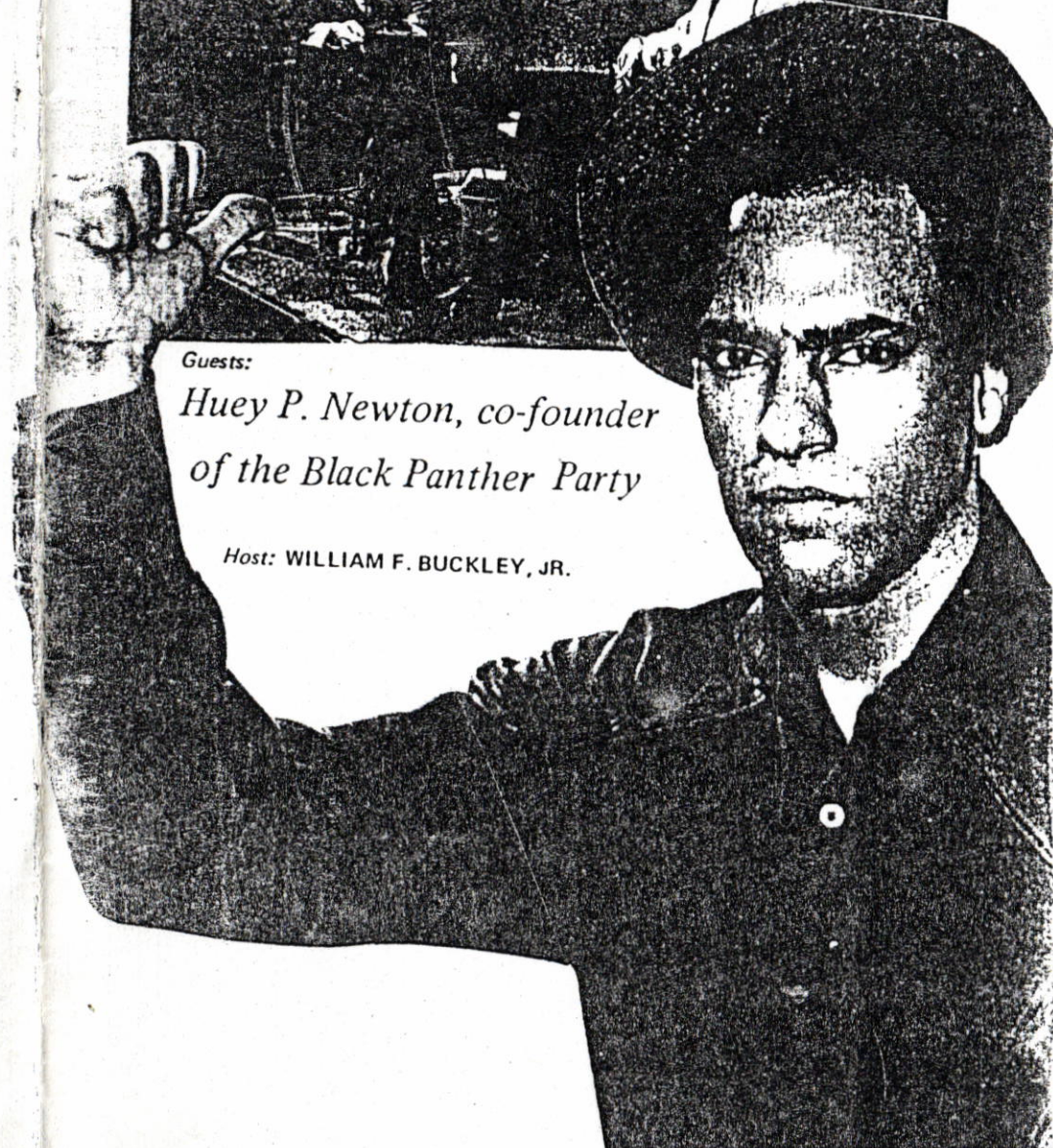
FIRING LINE



Guests:

*Huey P. Newton, co-founder
of the Black Panther Party*

Host: WILLIAM F. BUCKLEY, JR.



Subject: "HOW DOES IT GO WITH THE BLACK MOVEMENT?"

*Panelists: Lanny Sinkin, executive director, Urban Coalition, Trinity University
Patricia Holland, Intern Urban Studies, Trinity University
Gary Mounce, assistant professor of political science, Trinity University*

FIRING LINE is produced and directed by WARREN STEIBEL

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MR. BUCKLEY: In 1900 the Black Panther movement was founded. Prominent among the founders were Bobby Seale, who is its president, and Huey Newton, after Eldridge Cleaver probably its best known champion. In recent months, of course, the Newton wing expelled Eldridge Cleaver, who is living in Algeria, so that the Seale-Newton wing is nowadays supreme. Meanwhile, the Black Panthers have turned their backs officially on violence as a means of accomplishing whatever it is they propose to accomplish, concerning which we will, in due course, be enlightened.

Huey Newton, you will remember, was tried and convicted of killing a policeman — specifically, of involuntary manslaughter. The slogan, "Free Huey Newton," was to the late Sixties what the slogan, "Who promoted Perez?" was to the early Fifties. The higher court reversed the verdict on a technicality and Mr. Newton was tried twice more, the trial resulting, in each case, in a split jury. Finally, the presiding judge gave up and Huey Newton is free.

His mother is from Louisiana, his father from Arkansas, and he is the youngest of seven children. He was schooled in Oakland where he now lives. His first book was called *To Die for the People*, and prominently he will publish his autobiography which is called *Revolutionary Suicide*, a concept I shall now ask Mr. Newton, please, to explain.

MR. NEWTON: I'll explain it, but if I may propose upon you, I have a friend who's almost dying for me to ask this question, if you will. The question is: During the revolution of 1776, when the United States of America broke away from England, my friend would like to know which side would you have been on during that time?

MR. BUCKLEY: I think probably I would have been on the side of George Washington, in not absolutely sure because it remains to be established historically whether what we sought to prove at that point might not have been proved by more peaceful means. On the whole, I'm against revolutions, though I think, as revolutions go, that was a pretty humane one.

MR. NEWTON: Yes, you're not such a bad guy, after all. My friend will be surprised to hear that. I hope he's listening.

MR. BUCKLEY: His assumption was what?

MR. NEWTON: Well, he was puzzled, but I think that he was inclined to believe that you would have been on the side of the colonizers of England. But I'm pleased with the answer and I agree with you. The only revolution that is worth fighting is a humane revolution and —

MR. BUCKLEY: Also one that succeeds.

MR. NEWTON: Yes, right. Eventually.

MR. BUCKLEY: Because I feel that if King George had captured George Washington, he would have had the right to hang him.

MR. NEWTON: According to the law?

MR. BUCKLEY: Yes.

MR. NEWTON: But revolutions always, in some ways, contradict some laws. That's why it's called revolution.

MR. BUCKLEY: Well, revolutionary justice is its own justice, isn't it?

MR. NEWTON: Yes. Of course, it always professes to go under some human right or humane consideration and I think that we can judge revolutions on the basis of how much in fact, or objectively, people are dealt with in a fair way and are given more freedom. I think that one of my principles is that contradiction is the ruling principle of the universe and phenomena, whether it's the physical world or the biological world or the social world, have this internal contradiction that gives motion to things, that internal strain. Much of the time we Homo sapiens don't realize that no matter what sort of conditions we establish, no matter what government we establish at this point, there also will be that internal contradiction that will have to be resolved and resolved in a rational, just way. And, of course, that is very vague on how to deal with it. Many times we claim actions are revolutionary when really they're not. So, I appreciate your answer and I would agree with that part of it.

MR. BUCKLEY: Which part?

MR. NEWTON: The part about the only revolution that is worthwhile or that is a real revolution that succeeds would be a humane revolution and that a —

MR. BUCKLEY: Otherwise, it's called an

MR. NEWTON: Most of us think — we've been taught, we've been programmed by our schools and our universities to think in categories. This is very much different than thinking dialectically where many, many things are in play at the same time. We think that education means formal education, perhaps, or maybe it means political education. You must define what you do mean.

When I say education I mean a lifting of the consciousness of the people to where external stimuli will bombard the human organism and then, from that process, you begin to have some sort of awareness of what's going on. I agree with Sigmund Freud that that's the first step then in controlling, you know, what's wrong with you, the social forces. You have to know what you're dealing with to start.

So, when I say education I mean it in the broadest sense of the word. Technical education — We're living in a very technical world, now, thanks to the West, if you want to say thank you. I think that it is a contribution to humanity. I don't like how they arrived at it. I accuse them of trespassing *de bonis aspectis*. They took away other people's goods and they dominated them as their very own. That wealth snowballed and certain people were able to inherit without even working at all, such as my friend here, and they protect that interest of the right of inheritance, you see. So I say education — be conscious and know as much as you possibly can so that we can start dealing with these impoverished piles we call societies now.

MR. BUCKLEY: For the record, while you were relaxing in jail, I was working. Mr. Sinkin.

(laughter)

MR. NEWTON: Maybe you call working running your mouth (laughter) on these TV programs. I mean, I don't see any calluses on your hands.

MR. BUCKLEY: I was writing all the books you haven't read. Mr. Sinkin.

MR. NEWTON: Is that right?

MR. SINKIN: I'd like to go back to you —

MR. NEWTON: From what I understand about the books, it didn't take too much time to do that. They're very much like your conversation here (laughter). And I'm only

joking with you because I really enjoy (laughter)... No, no, truly, I find you very entertaining and I like the hot kind of debate where we have to struggle to get the say, you know. So I'm sorry if I was hard to take, but you've proven yourself to be the gentleman that everyone says you are, in spite of all the other criticisms.

(laughter)

MR. BUCKLEY: Mr. Sinkin, I think we have just a second.

MR. SINKIN: Going back to the idea of community control, recognizing that we haven't succeeded to date in the ideal of integration in our community and that community control would be one way of almost recognizing reality, what happens to the fact that community control means that people in the inner city, for example, control a decaying, dying city?

MR. NEWTON: But, see, that troubles me. You're still thinking, and it makes me so mad because you're still thinking —

MR. BUCKLEY: I'm afraid you're going to have to answer this after the program is over. Thank you, very much, Mr. Newton, thank you very much, ladies and gentlemen.

MR. NEWTON: Bring that up again. We were taught to think in the wrong way. When I say community control —

motley crew, really, at this time in our evolution.

MR. BUCKLEY: Mr. Mounce.

MR. MOUNCE: I have a question for you, Mr. Buckley. Much of the emphasis of my research, perhaps of the concerns of the students here today, has been on looking at the Panthers in the past two or three years and seeing a great deal of metamorphosis that has taken place. Probably we still have many more questions for Mr. Newton about where the Panthers stand now compared with the past, but I would like to ask you if you have undergone a metamorphosis in your own appraisal. Some of your earlier statements about the Panthers were rather strong and I was curious about your present appraisal.

MR. BUCKLEY: My judgment, as publicly made, of the Panther movement was based on an examination of its own literature. I read the Panther paper and described its contents and its publications. I think it's probably true that whoever edited it was rather hypervigilant and that it's probably true that a lot of people who were in the party themselves were a little bit taken aback by it. The saner element appears to have prevailed, but I don't think it's a historical exaggeration to say that the Black Panther party, to the extent that one could infer its thoughts from its declarations, was based on the need to despise the white race.

MR. MOUNCE: Could I suggest an example?

MR. BUCKLEY: Sure.

MR. MOUNCE: In one — I believe it was *Look* or it could have been *National Review* — article, you disagreed very strongly with Dick Gregory, who had indicated that the militant stance and symbolism and rhetoric functionally could actually displace violence, if you see what I mean. Perhaps, could you accept that as a phenomenon of a positive good that the Panthers have contributed?

MR. BUCKLEY: Yes. Yes, I could. Unfortunately, as much could be said of the Ku Klux Klan. Dick Gregory gave a concrete example — you may not remember — about a black woman who felt intimidated — this was about two or three years ago — and she called the Black Panther headquarters there and they sent someone to look out for her, and he was armed. On the basis of the

assurance that she got from his presence, she did calm down and recovered her stability and there is no question that people can perform that kind of function, armed in that kind of a way, and I have no doubt that here and there the Black Panthers did.

MR. NEWTON: I would like to say this, and I'm sorry if I interrupt.

MR. BUCKLEY: Sure.

MR. NEWTON: When people equate the Black Panther party with such people as the Ku Klux Klan or White Citizens Council, I get sort of upset. I agree that I would like to see a world — and we agree on more points than we probably have time to realize now. I would hope that dialogue, dialectical struggle, a struggle just through the words would probably be the next advance that man will come through and put the club down. But I think that there are certain objective kinds of difficulties of reaching that point immediately.

I think that things just don't happen, you start. But as long as there's a special economic interest that one has to support, an authority that one has to support, then one creates a rhetoric in order to sell that to a group, to an army, to henchmen. I think this kind of dialogue will be inflammatory and cause much violence and so forth. I will even point out the history of the Black Panthers. I think the rhetoric ran amuck with the leadership and the influence of Eldridge Cleaver and it caused many murders. It laid the foundation so that even the black community could say, "Oh, those bad guys out there. You see they only want violence and robberies and so forth." This kind of rhetoric, I think, can promote physical conflict so that dialogue itself carries no sort of virtue unless it's pointed into a direction in order to resolve a problem, you see.

MR. MOUNCE: What about the role today of the Panthers? You indicate, for example, in *To Die For The People* that one of the first priorities is education, but you don't actually define that. Do you mean political education, use of the media, or do you mean formal education? For example, would you have advice for the black students here today?

insurrection or mutiny.

MR. NEWTON: Yes, or rebellion or riot.

MR. BUCKLEY: Yes. As I understand it, the generally accepted test of the integrity of a revolution is whether it is established, the revolution having taken place, that the people truly supported it.

MR. NEWTON: A revolution cannot really succeed without the people's support.

MR. BUCKLEY: Oh, sure it can. Oh, sure. It's easy.

MR. NEWTON: Well, changes in authority can be successful, but I think that we would have to have a functional definition. We would have to stipulate what we mean by revolution.

MR. BUCKLEY: Well, there are revolutions, roughly speaking, every two or three months in Latin America without the people getting involved at all.

MR. NEWTON: Well, I would probably call it by — I think it's just the words. I would call it a coup d'état.

MR. BUCKLEY: That's revolution.

MR. NEWTON: Well, I say that by way of definition. I would reject your definition, but if you want to call a coup d'état a revolution, then I can function with you —

MR. BUCKLEY: And if you want to call a popular revolution a popular revolution, please call it a popular revolution.

MR. NEWTON: Well, then I would say that a revolution would have to be popular —

MR. BUCKLEY: Why?

MR. NEWTON: — or else I wouldn't label it as a revolution. So really we're just dealing in semantics of what a revolution is made up of *in fact*. And I say that we won't have to belabor that. If you would like to call any rebellion that establishes new authority revolution, then I can entertain it because, you know, it's just a word anyway. But changes in governments and changes in the relationship of people and authority and institutions — I say they take many forms and I like to distinguish, you know.

MR. BUCKLEY: Sure. What would you call the thing that ousted King Faruk?

MR. NEWTON: I wouldn't call it a revolution.

MR. BUCKLEY: Even though an entirely new order was brought in.

MR. NEWTON: Yes, but with coup d'états, it's common that an entirely new order will be brought in.

MR. BUCKLEY: No, not necessarily.

MR. NEWTON: I say it's possible.

MR. BUCKLEY: Sometimes a coup d'état takes away one colonel and puts in another colonel.

MR. NEWTON: Sometimes, but there are other times that a coup d'état could establish an entirely different relationship between the institutions and the people in a particular place.

MR. BUCKLEY: In which case it's revolutionary.

MR. NEWTON: I say that I can function with that definition if you insist that's the only one, but to me the true meaning of revolution carries a special connotation. And, of course, there's only the nice, subjective kind of feelings about it. But I have to distinguish between changes of power — just for my own way of thinking, establish calling one a flower and the other a skunk. But I wouldn't argue the absolute kind of definition to, you know, the conditions that I'm talking about.

MR. BUCKLEY: I grant that you have considerable authority in your movement. I'm not sure that you have an authority to impose your own terminology.

MR. NEWTON: Well, I argue that your definition is not necessarily a lexical definition. I already granted you if you want to stipulate that as the definition of revolution, I'll entertain it, but —

MR. BUCKLEY: Maybe this is the occasion to say about the historian Macaulay that he shouldn't have referred to the Glorious Revolution of 1688 because it didn't fit your standard. But meanwhile he wrote 13 volumes on the subject and called it a revolution.

MR. NEWTON: I say that he can refer to it any way he likes.

MR. BUCKLEY: He did.

(laughter)

MR. NEWTON: And I say that if we want to appreciate his —

MR. BUCKLEY: He wasn't an imperialist, was he?

MR. NEWTON: I say if we want to appreciate his definition, fine. I'm not attempting to stipulate a new definition. There are authorities that I could cite that would call a revolution a very special thing. One authority would be the scholar-philosopher, Chairman Mao Tse-tung. He would only call the people's movement and the overthrow of the authority by the proletariat a revolution, but I wouldn't support Chairman Mao against you in saying that that is the only definition. Unfortunately, with the English language, especially with the American language — that's a little different from the English language — that's a pretty vague thing and you have so many lexical definitions that directly contradict each other. I don't think that we should belabor our audience talking about who has the authority to define a particular phenomenon.

MR. BUCKLEY: Well, not unless we want to.

(laughter)

MR. NEWTON: Do we want to? If you want to, then I want to. Let thy will be done.

MR. BUCKLEY: As you no doubt know, the use of the word "people," the use of the term "popular support," is done by Chairman Mao, as you referred to him in your book, with some sense of proprietorship; that is to say, he's always talking about the people desiring this, that and the other. The people are, in fact, never consulted about anything. They have never been consulted by Chairman Mao about any of his regulations or about his foreign policy.

MR. NEWTON: I differ with you. I think that too much of the time, because of our cultural differences, we only, again, consider being consulted within the scope of what we feel, subjectively, being consulted is all

about. For instance, in China as well as in Latin America people say, "Well, there's no democracy, say, in Cuba because there's no —"

MR. BUCKLEY: Democracy?

MR. NEWTON: — putting the ballot in the box. So the people are not consulted." But on the other hand, Fidel Castro says that the people are consulted even in a more serious way, that the authorities are put to the acid test, and whether I support that procedure or not is not the point. The acid test is that for a long time the people can be fooled, but they can't be fooled and misused all of the time and the test would be the doom of your authority through armed revolution. That is the way that they're consulted in the final analysis. I think that —

MR. BUCKLEY: I don't know what you're talking about and I think you don't either.

MR. NEWTON: Well, you can only speak for yourself. I'm —

MR. BUCKLEY: That's why I say "I think." That's why I say "I think."

(laughter)

MR. NEWTON: I say that I'm perfectly equipped to — I'll be clearer then, okay?

MR. BUCKLEY: Yes. You were going to explain wherein Castro is democratic.

MR. NEWTON: No, no, I'm going to explain a principle and the principle is how people are consulted in a democratic society. I'm saying that the Westerners have a particular definition of what democracy is about, and I can appreciate that definition. In other words, it doesn't matter whether I accept it or not for now, but here in the West we feel that the only time the people are given democratic rights to have a say so is when they put the ballot in the box and they vote for a particular person —

MR. BUCKLEY: No, not necessarily.

MR. NEWTON: — within a particular framework.

MR. BUCKLEY: No, the answer is: Not necessarily.

general condition in China.

So the ethnic minorities I observed control their whole thing and they have a right to have a representative on the Chinese Communist party. They have the seat waiting; they choose who will go. And at the same time they have their principle. He talks about an organized opposition. It's true. You cannot in China vote to organize an opposition to reinstate private ownership, any more than you can here organize an opposition to take away private ownership in this country. So, it's what do you choose? I happen to choose the way they go about it, all right?

MR. BUCKLEY: Thank you, Mr. Sinkin, for listing a lucid reply to the problems of the inner city. Mrs. Holland.

(laughter)

MR. NEWTON: Did I get too theoretical again?

MR. BUCKLEY: Oh, no, Mr. Sinkin will explain it to us later. He understands everything.

MR. NEWTON: Well, before this, I would say that inner cities or the cities of this country could be organized like that.

MR. SINKIN: You're saying community control.

MR. NEWTON: Community control but, at the same time, it's not like black control and no white could come in or no Chinese could come in. I say you have democracy in the inner city, but the administration should reflect the population of the people there, and it will if it's —

MR. BUCKLEY: And no capitalists like Lin Piao. Mrs. Holland.

MRS. HOLLAND: In reading through Mr. —

MR. NEWTON: You say Lin Piao is a capitalist?

MR. BUCKLEY: No, no, I was teasing you.

(laughter)

MR. NEWTON: Oh, I see. I thought that maybe we could discuss that in private, but I wouldn't say anything in public (laughter). I have my criticism of Lin Piao.

MR. BUCKLEY: All right, but let's hear from Mrs. Holland first, shall we?

MRS. HOLLAND: Okay. Mr. Newton, in reading through most of the earlier Panther material, religion was not emphasized, or de-emphasized.

MR. NEWTON: Yes.

MRS. HOLLAND: Have you and the members of your party rethought about the relevance of religion in the culture of black people in America?

MR. NEWTON: I think with any people religion is almost a necessary thing that we would engage in. I myself am a very religious person. I have my definitions of what religion is about and I think when you speak of religion you're talking about God and so forth. As I analyze religion, I find that we always talk about the same God and that is always the person or thing in nature that we do not know, that we do not understand, that we do not control, yet, somehow it affects us.

So, in Webster's Dictionary they say that this also can be defined as ignorance, you see. You don't know God, but there's something out there. You didn't create yourself. You must be created. I find to tell a person, "Don't believe in God," is also to tell him, "Pretend that you know everything, all of the answers." So, no matter what religion, whether it's Judaism, Christianity or Islam, God is always that thing, the unknown, they say the unknowable, and I say that it's the same as ignorance. It's ignorance when you don't know it and it's wisdom when you do.

My father has been a minister ever since I can remember and he used always to tell me, you know, that the church is in the heart of men and God grows within. So as we eliminate our ignorance and our god stops being ignorance and becomes wisdom, then He grows within and then we'll really know who God is and we'll see that we walk with Him, that we talk with Him. We'll find ourselves and we'll know that our pipe has been in our mouth all the time. We'll know really who we are and we'll know who God is and we'll find that He is the all, really. That is a nonsense term now. Man only knows events inbetween the beginning and the end. Most of those are words that maybe Mr. Buckley can define, but I can't. We know there's something outside of events that we don't understand. We're a very

me very insecure. Do you think that maybe I hit on something, you know, of importance to you?

MR. SINKIN: I thought what you said was quite clear in the concepts you were exploring. I'm —

MR. NEWTON: Well, it seems that Mr. Buckley is the only dunce around here, so far (laughter). I'm only kidding.

MR. SINKIN: But I'm a little more interested in getting even more practical than either of you reached and down to present social policies in the cities, in the inner cities, the continuing and ever recurring crisis in the inner city of large numbers of people seemingly trapped in an endless cycle of poverty and whether either of you can suggest and agree upon — which I think would be remarkable — a social policy for the inner city which would lead to the reduction of tensions, the new levels of communications, and —

MR. NEWTON: I have some ideas. Would you like to speak first?

MR. BUCKLEY: Oh, no, no, no, you go right ahead.

(laughter)

MR. NEWTON: Well, first, I would like to make this very clear, so that Mr. Buckley and myself won't go off on another tangent. I saw crystal clear how we could start to reduce the kind of conflicts that we have in this country. I saw an example of it in China. Now, this is not China. It's a whole other culture. Their history is different so, therefore, their transformation will be different. Things will take a different shape.

But what I saw was this. When I went there I was very unenlightened. I thought that I knew something about China, but I thought that, like it's said so often, China would be a homogeneous kind of racial, ethnic territory. But then I found out that 50 percent of the Chinese territory is occupied by 54 percent of the people who are national minorities, they call them. They have 10 — they call it the top 10 statistically — large ethnic minorities. They speak a different language, look much different, eat different food, yet, no conflict. And I observed one thing: Each region, like we call cities, now we say community control, is absolutely controlled by those ethnic

minority people, yet, they are still Chinese. Now, suppose another ethnic person is living, say, in the Wigway territory. Suppose a Hun is living there, if I say that correctly they're the majority group there in China. Then ask, "Well, what happens? How is he treated? Can he hold office in your city or your regional administration?" They say, "Yes, if he's voted in." But we feel that the people there have a right, they know more about the culture and the needs and how to implement the institutions than we do and — Pardon me?

MR. BUCKLEY: Would that include the Tibetans?

MR. NEWTON: Yes.

MR. BUCKLEY: No.

MR. NEWTON: Hold, now. There was a big conflict for so long —

MR. BUCKLEY: Yes, they call it genocide.

MR. NEWTON: Oh, all right, then. And, of course, if you talk about genocide, if the Chinese have done wrong, they're in a barrel with the rest of us — with England as well as America in their genocide against blacks, with the whole —

MR. BUCKLEY: What do you call the Cultural Revolution?

MR. NEWTON: — Western world that crucified over 50 million blacks —

MR. BUCKLEY: What do you call the Cultural Revolution?

MR. NEWTON: — alone, that America took part in. So, you could call it genocide, you know. When we put titles on things, you know, I even go "Ah!" So I'm not even talking about whether I agree with the way they handled this particular ethnic minority. If I start to do this, I will get into —

MR. BUCKLEY: But you've just been contradicting yourself.

MR. NEWTON: Hold, hold. I'm saying that I disagree with him. I say they do administer their region at this point. As to how they were treated sometime past, we would have to argue just factual information. I'm not willing to do that. I'm talking about a

MR. NEWTON: Okay, well, let me finish my proposition.

MR. BUCKLEY: Wait a minute, no. I'm on this program — no, no. Not until —

(laughter)

MR. NEWTON: I insist. I'm your guest (laughter) and I heard that you're a charming man —

MR. BUCKLEY: That's right, and I'm the host.

(laughter)

MR. NEWTON: — and that you're polite. I don't have — Hold on, wait just a minute.

MR. BUCKLEY: It isn't merely a matter of voting. It's a matter of expressing yourself.

MR. NEWTON: Just one minute. I don't have to be polite and charming because it's not my program (laughter). You owe me a special privilege. What I'm saying is that sometimes people are heard and people participate with their say-so, and it could be called democracy because it's a question of who defines democracy.

Now much of the time, if you're not allowed to vote by putting the ballot into the box and choosing an administration or a person, if this does not take place, then in the West we're inclined to say there's no democracy. I'm saying this is not necessarily true if democracy will be defined as all of the people getting a fair share and a fair deal of whatever wealth is there and some control over their administrators.

Now, in armed revolution the people are casting the ballots, certainly. And this is the acid test that some say, "Well, there's no need for them to deal in bourgeois democracy because even in the West they say democracy, but you can't vote out private property." You can only vote within the scope of the definition of the institutions of the people in authority who control them.

MR. BUCKLEY: All right, now, hold it.

MR. NEWTON: In some other countries — Wait, hold it. In some other countries — I'll let you talk in one minute, honest.

MR. BUCKLEY: All right, go ahead.

MR. NEWTON: In some other countries, they say, "No, the people will decide what happens and they are not relegated or bound by any definition, by the interests of the authority if it happens to be bourgeois authority," and I mean owners and those who control most of the wealth. I would have to appreciate it — If they call that the flower, I would say flower also. Now, whether we choose that procedure or not would have to be considered by our own subjective kind of desire. I will agree that with human affairs most of the time we call our subjective desires objective. I try not to do that and this is why I try to be very honest in debates and just good discussions.

MR. BUCKLEY: Okay?

MR. NEWTON: Yes, thank you. You are charming and you're very polite.

MR. BUCKLEY: And very silent.

(laughter)

MR. NEWTON: Yes.

MR. BUCKLEY: The right of the individual to define for himself extends to the extent of his capacity to communicate. George Orwell wrote a very famous book based on Big Brother's attempt so to rob words of their meanings that war became peace and justice became oppression and so on. Now, democracy consists not only in being permitted to vote, but in being permitted to organize an opposition —

MR. NEWTON: Yes.

MR. BUCKLEY: — so as to discover whether people are latently on your side. There is no practice of democracy, as commonly understood, in Cuba. The assumption that an organization is democratic because otherwise the leader would be overthrown is naive.

MR. NEWTON: There's one fallacy. In what I think that you would consider democracy, you can only organize an opposition within the scope as defined by the authorities who have control in the first place, and this is true in the socialist societies as well as in the capitalist societies.

MR. BUCKLEY: Give me an example. Give me an example.

MR. NEWTON: An example is this: In this

society, you're not allowed to organize an opposition against the authority, through armed resistance, with the intent to overthrow the government.

MR. BUCKLEY: That's right.

MR. NEWTON: So therefore —

MR. BUCKLEY: We call that rebellion, insurrection.

MR. NEWTON: By law, but you've already agreed that if you were alive in 1776 you probably would have chosen Washington and this definitely would have been against the law. So, I'm saying that when we talk about organizing opposition no government in this world that I know about has the audacity, at this point in human beings' limited freedom, to organize an opposition against the authority any way he likes, but you have certain —

MR. BUCKLEY: I don't understand you. If you want to organize an opposition in the United States, short of killing people, as I understand it —

MR. NEWTON: Hold it right there — "short of killing people." Why do you say that?

MR. BUCKLEY: Well, because those are the rules.

MR. NEWTON: Those are the rules.

MR. BUCKLEY: Yes.

MR. NEWTON: This is just what I'm saying. So, therefore, you have to operate on a limited scope, limited to some point.

MR. BUCKLEY: That's right. The rules of democracy are that the art of persuasion has to be practiced short of assassination.

MR. NEWTON: No, no, I understand that, but I want to be clear to you. It's also the same principle operating in Socialist or Communist governments.

MR. BUCKLEY: How? Give me an example.

MR. NEWTON: You're allowed —

MR. BUCKLEY: Where?

MR. NEWTON: Well, let's choose, for an example —

MR. BUCKLEY: Czechoslovakia. How about Czechoslovakia?

MR. NEWTON: Let's use the People's Republic of China.

MR. BUCKLEY: All right. What are you allowed to do?

MR. NEWTON: You're allowed to organize opposition —

MR. BUCKLEY: No, you're not.

MR. NEWTON: — against —

MR. BUCKLEY: No, you're not.

MR. NEWTON: Well, we disagree in fact now and that's a real contradiction.

MR. BUCKLEY: Tell me one authority on China who says you can. Name one.

MR. NEWTON: Well, we could start with —

MR. BUCKLEY: Start with anybody.

MR. NEWTON: Start with Chou En-lai.

MR. BUCKLEY: When did he say you could organize an opposition?

MR. NEWTON: Oh, I'll tell you when. When I spoke to him in the People's Republic of China, I had about six hours' private talk with him and I had many hours of talk with responsible members of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist party. I was very shocked because I suddenly realized — and I was sort of ashamed, too — that I was brainwashed by Western thought. Before I went, I would have lied to you and said, "Oh, you have freedom of speech in China," you know, because I believed deep down that they were moving toward, not what —

MR. BUCKLEY: How can you organize opposition without freedom of speech?

MR. NEWTON: Let me finish. If you interrupt before I finish the idea, then we'll talk about contrary things and we won't have the contradiction that we're attempting to have anyway. I say that as I sat there this

representative of a small or large party or faction. But the people in all of the cities in this country can't ever find any small cult, party or anything. He has other things who will, as soon as the news reporter comes and puts the camera up, start talking. Then was created what I call a media organization. It's a little different than a paper organization, but we're in a push-button world now. Right?

MR. BUCKLEY: Well, now, given your organizing talent and your superior theoretical position, why is it that you don't have more —

MR. NEWTON: You flatter me saying that —

MR. BUCKLEY: I'm accepting your definition of yourself.

MR. NEWTON: Well, no, I say I like to think of myself as somewhat of an organizer —

MR. BUCKLEY: Yes.

MR. NEWTON: — with some expertise. But I'm not very good, really. If I were good, then America would be changed tomorrow, or yesterday; but we're still struggling on precinct levels, making many turns and many maneuvers to gain —

MR. BUCKLEY: I know that you're struggling, but what I'm anxious to know is —

MR. NEWTON: Then I couldn't be that good, then, because —

MR. BUCKLEY: Well, not necessarily. After all —

MR. NEWTON: I'm saying, on objective evidence, that not too many of the changes that I desire have been made as rapidly as I desire, but everything is in a constant state of transformation. America has certainly changed. Blacks' status in the country is different than it was in 1619. I would have to acknowledge that. I would have to acknowledge contributors to the people's struggle, such as Martin Luther King, I would have to acknowledge John Brown, Denmark Vesey, or Nat "the Prophet" Turner. I would have to acknowledge people who have contributed to the change in

America —

MR. BUCKLEY: Well, who said you shouldn't? I don't know what you're up to right now with this litany.

MR. NEWTON: No, I'm only up to this.

MR. BUCKLEY: I'm not saying —

MR. NEWTON: I'm only up to this. I'm saying that we all play a part in attempting to change things so that we will not have the physical clash that causes, inevitably, death of men. I myself reject violence. I would like to see a world where there's no need for it and it no longer will have to exist —

MR. BUCKLEY: No, no, no — yes, yes.

MR. NEWTON: — because I think the death of any man diminishes all of us because we're involved with humanity. Now, I say that while doing this the reason that we are so bullheaded and so many armies clash in the night is because we don't have the concept of, as Nietzsche says, that "other shore." You know, "I love the great expanses for there my greater doors; Eros longing for the other shore."

I would like to admit to you that I don't have the answer to even a start to resolve the contradictions in this country so that we can have that new order, but I do have a desire, a desperate desire, to reach the other shore and I think that each day, each minute, whether we know it or not, the world is arriving at some other level, some other relationship between people. I just work for the hopeful goal that this new level of relationship between men will be as desirable as possible. I hope it will be a new relationship between all of us, whether you define yourself philosophically as a conservative, as a progressive, as a reactionary, or a revolutionist. But I think all of these labels really clutter our conversation and make it possible for me to speak all this gibberish you're talking about. But it's frustrating, right?

MR. BUCKLEY: Mr. Sinkin, from Trinity College.

MR. SINKIN: Yes, well, I've enjoyed the exploration of Mr. Newton's views.

MR. NEWTON: You know, I always accuse myself of really speaking in a conglomeration of gibberish and he's made

prison —

MR. BUCKLEY: Whereas he was —

MR. NEWTON: — then with his influence and much of the respect that I personally gave him — so it's my fault also — the media enjoyed the big sensationalism of a gun this, a gun that. So, in many ways we set ourselves up for the murder that we received and the violations we received upon our persons and the people then were afraid. They said, "No, this is not what we want," when we were not about that anyway.

So these are things that we have to live with. That's one of the mistakes and one of the contradictions we have with our organization, but you have them with any. You have to be very careful and not be too swayed by just the eloquence of a person. He should not have ever arrived at that position which I personally appointed him to shortly after he had gotten out of Folsom Prison.

So, I accept Eldridge Cleaver as mainly my responsibility. I contributed so much to almost the destruction of our party and so many fallen comrades who are now in their graves or in prison. These are things that I have to live with.

MR. BUCKLEY: So your point is that his emphasis on the need to use arms damaged the public image of the Black Panther party.

MR. NEWTON: And it damaged the effectiveness in organizing community, because only the people make a change — a change that sometimes I call revolution. All an organization or party can be is a vehicle or spark to get popular support and then the people carry out changes such as they desire. And your organization, of course, will be ineffective if your spark is in the wrong direction. If that's in left field and the wheat is in right field, then you get no place. But then you can have a spark in the same field and the spark then will be consumed by the enthusiasm of the people and the organization will become less important. So, we —

MR. BUCKLEY: If Eldridge Cleaver were to return to this country and challenge your leadership, are you quite confident that you would win any test of popularity against him?

MR. NEWTON: Well, many people consider

what that means, whether it means what most people, especially my friends, think that it means or the meaning I think that they entertain.

Now, I reject that. I'm not a leader. I feel myself as somewhat of an organizer, as humble as I may be; I've learned how to start to organize people so that they can protest and they can somehow get what they want. And, of course, I only indulge with those people where I have a subjective support for them in the first place. I would deal with the objective kind of situation to see what changes can be made, what changes I see that I could support, because there are some changes that I don't support and then I wouldn't call them revolutionary changes.

That's, again, my subjective definition. So I'm not a leader; I'm an organizer and that's the way I work. I'm not a speaker even. I'm terrified of cameras, radios, and large groups. I only pretend that I'm not and that's why I'm so belligerent with you and forceful and aggressive. That's to hide my fear.

MR. BUCKLEY: So, you think that your organizing talent would result in a victory over Eldridge Cleaver, not your forensic talent or your theoretical —

MR. NEWTON: Looking at this hypothetically, if Eldridge Cleaver was able to organize the people, then that would be a statement where history would denounce me and justify him or else history would justify my way of doing things, my influence on the party. Really, it's the party that really makes things move. I am influential. I have a vote and my vote is probably worth more influence than many other comrades. I think that I work for that to be changed as they become clearer and get an expertise in organizing because I want to make us all stronger.

So it wouldn't be a fight. After I stretch my imagination, I can't conceive of a fight between Eldridge and myself for leadership of anything. In other words, if the party, that particular group of people say that Eldridge Cleaver is in his rightful place, then I will bow out. I don't think that Eldridge will come back but, hypothetically again, if he were to come back, then I think quickly the media would drop him — because we have an affectionate name for him. We call him an "M.F." — media freak. The media created, you know, this kind of ghost split. They listen to him and then they

Chinese said, "You know, Comrade, all state administrations are oppressive to someone." And he started to explain. In capital states, the people who own the capital are a minority and they oppress the majority of the people through exploitation. You know, you call it rhetoric — I was listening. And he said in national states that sometimes a whole nation will oppress the rest of the world with its national administration. So there's still a minority oppressing the majority of the world's people, like the Hitler regime attempted to do, and like this regime attempts to do to a point.

MR. BUCKLEY: I'm losing the thread. You started off —

MR. NEWTON: Let me finish.

MR. BUCKLEY: No, wait a minute.

MR. NEWTON: Let me finish. I haven't gotten to the meat. I insist that I give you the anecdote.

MR. BUCKLEY: Give me the answer to the question: How can you demonstrate there is freedom —

MR. NEWTON: Let's not do this, all right? (laughter) What I thought was so shocking was his last statement, and I'll be very brief and I'll talk fast. I said, "Comrade, you said all state administrations. What about the Communist? What about your progressive socialist state? Is that also oppressive?" And then he said, "Yes." He said, "While you have state administrations, you expropriate from the people because if the people in this country earn, say, \$10.00 an hour, we only give them \$8.00. The only difference in us and the capitalist state is that our appropriation is different. We don't have private ownership so we give that \$2.00 we expropriated from the people back to the general welfare, and in the capitalist state, they give it to themselves, in their pockets. So, therefore, the people are still not as free as we'd like for them to be." They say we work for the dissolution of the state, we work for our own disappearance. And when he said that, I said, "Sedition. He works for the end of the Communist regime of China."

I thought that was very honest — like I met so much honesty there. I thought that was a very free statement and that's a statement that would lead me to believe that if he's working for the dissolution of the state, then an opposition could arise to work

for that withering away of territorial border lines. When China, as Russia has already done, strays from this philosophy, I will stray from my respect for them. As far as the United States and the West is concerned, there are many democratic principles that the people in China probably don't enjoy according to what you would call democratic principles. And I say —

MR. BUCKLEY: Hang on a second. Hang on a second. This is not going to go on as a monologue. So —

MR. NEWTON: All right. All right. Well, you're fair, I'll let you talk.

MR. BUCKLEY: Yes, it's not going on as a monologue.

MR. NEWTON: Fairness begets fairness, right?

MR. BUCKLEY: I'm attempting to pin down a point and I'm losing track of it.

MR. NEWTON: You think —

MR. BUCKLEY: It may be that one of the difficulties you have as chief spokesman for the Black Panther party —

MR. NEWTON: Yes, I have many.

MR. BUCKLEY: — is your total incoherence; that is to say, people don't understand what you're talking about. I don't understand what you're talking about and I'm a very close listener.

MR. NEWTON: You see, I think you're very limited in your definition of things. Perhaps you don't understand, but we do have an audience here and we have an audience throughout the country —

MR. BUCKLEY: That's right, and you've had an audience for six years and you have 2,000 members.

MR. NEWTON: — and I think that only through empirical evidence, the observations of experience — I'll let the people judge whether I'm incoherent or not.

MR. BUCKLEY: Yes.

MR. NEWTON: Now whether I'm incoherent or not could be tested right now. Did anyone here understand me? You're allowed to speak.

died.

MR. NEWTON: Thank you. Well, sometimes I do speak in a conglomeration of gibberish. I'm not very schooled in the technique that you have here, but I am schooled in honesty and —

MR. BUCKLEY: Why don't we not talk about your limitations or my limitations and just simply —

MR. NEWTON: Well, you brought them up (laughter). I was going to spare you and not tell you that sometimes you lose your shirt and your suit —

(laughter)

MR. BUCKLEY: Yes.

MR. NEWTON: — but you do that. I don't think you do it too often, and I'm glad you found it.

MR. BUCKLEY: Okay, okay. Let's see if we can isolate one point.

MR. NEWTON: Aren't we having fun, though?

MR. BUCKLEY: It went as follows. I'll recapitulate.

MR. NEWTON: You're not getting frustrated, are you?

MR. BUCKLEY: No, no, no.

MR. NEWTON: I like talking to you.

MR. BUCKLEY: I'm glad you do. You're manifesting it. (laughter) We're trying to isolate the question whether there is a right to organize opposition within China. You said, after all —

MR. NEWTON: No, no, that's not what I meant.

MR. BUCKLEY: I said, "Who agrees with you that there is?" You said, "Chou En-lai." You then proceeded to tell me what Chou En-lai said to you in a way that didn't actually communicate anything.

MR. NEWTON: I could tell you other names — Comrade Wigway, Comrade Tong,

difference. I named a person that you probably are familiar with. They say that you are well-read and you're conscious of world events, so I only named one of the officials in China so that you could identify him. I don't know how many officials you know and certainly you don't know the people. I doubt if you've been to the villages, the countryside of China. Or have you? I think I heard that you did go.

MR. BUCKLEY: Are you —

MR. NEWTON: Did you go?

MR. BUCKLEY: Are you aware of the message that Chou En-lai —

MR. NEWTON: Have you been to China?

MR. BUCKLEY: Yes, I have. Are you aware of the message that Chou En-lai sent to Allende? Are you?

MR. NEWTON: Did you go with —

MR. BUCKLEY: Are you? Are you?

MR. NEWTON: Pardon me?

MR. BUCKLEY: Are you aware?

MR. NEWTON: Yes, I saw the letter.

MR. BUCKLEY: Yes, and you remember that he said he does not believe that Marxism can be ushered in via parliamentary democracy. In other words, Chou En-lai in that particular statement said that he does not believe in the right to organize an opposition, that it is contrary to the dialectic of Marxism. But, actually, this —

MR. NEWTON: Hold it just one minute. I would like to make this clear for the audience and for yourself. I don't know about Chou En-lai but one thing I'm not — I'm not a Marxist. I'm not a Marxist. I think that the whole concept of what Marx tried to lay down as a scholar, a historian, a philosopher, was distorted and people became priests of Marx and of other people. I think that Marx was a scientist and he tried to point out a very vast method of analyzing phenomena. It was called dialectical materialism. You can't usher in dialectical materialism because that's the whole order and process that the universe goes through. In other words, I explained one of the

principles is that contradiction is the ruling principle of the universe. It gives motion to matter and contradiction is based upon internal strife. Internal strife inside of any physical thing seems to give it the ability to move and to be transformed, and societies or people or my fellow revolutionaries who think that you can usher in a social order through any sort of ideological proclamation are very wrong. The society itself strains to fight against colonialism, such as America did with England, and then after that you get a situation with workers, the unions, in which they struggle against the owners of the factories. Then you come up with some other sort of order and it's much different than the formalities of the ballot. You don't know where it's really going to land until you become such a scientist, until the people can harness the forces that are in operation and set them in a direction that's most desirable. So —

MR. BUCKLEY: Why don't we get a little bit more concrete, if you don't mind? Let's talk about the Black Panther movement. Those who want you —

MR. NEWTON: I like to argue theory with you probably better than factual things.

MR. BUCKLEY: Well, yes, but I'm a little bit more interested in factual things.

MR. NEWTON: I thought you were a theoretician.

MR. BUCKLEY: People who want your corrections on Marx can read your book.

MR. NEWTON: I haven't seen any of your programs and I'm sorry you read my book and I'm embarrassed I haven't ever read anything that you've done, so you probably know more about me than I know about you as a person, but I was inclined to believe that you somewhat —

MR. BUCKLEY: No, I said factual, not personal things. I don't want to talk about personal things.

MR. NEWTON: I mean, I was inclined to believe that you were a thinker, somewhat of a scholar and a theoretician, but I'm usually wrong about (laughter) those things.

MR. BUCKLEY: I'm also a yachtsman, which doesn't mean that we're here to discuss boats.

MR. NEWTON: I don't know anything about the facts of boats.

(laughter)

MR. BUCKLEY: Okay, so let's talk about —

MR. NEWTON: Like, I couldn't talk to you about that but I know something about theory, about political and philosophical theory.

MR. BUCKLEY: Okay, let's talk about your practical knowledge. Why did you feel it necessary to expel Eldridge Cleaver?

MR. NEWTON: Of course, first, he left the party. We thought that it was a good time for him to leave because in organizations, parties, and companies, you know, you get very bright, articulate people and they have great influence upon others and people are impressed. I've learned not to follow my first impression as I used to when I was younger, but when you get a person in who is articulate, bright, eloquent and also very hurt because of a depression that he's gone through and which has driven him somewhat sick, too sick to be in that position, he can with great influence lead the whole administration, the whole organization, down the drain, and so as —

MR. BUCKLEY: By doing what? What was it that led you down the drain?

MR. NEWTON: Well, when the party started in October of 1966, in Oakland, we had the occasion, as a strategy, to arm ourselves in a police alert patrol where we would follow the police. We were very careful to follow city ordinances about gun regulations and state law and constitutional rights, but we realized it wasn't a principle of revolution or a principle of the party that you pick up the gun now, and the gun was the only thing that defined revolution. So it was a strategy that was mistook.

After I went to prison, with Eldridge's influence, the gun was not only the symbol of revolution, it was a revolution. So, the rhetoric then did not point to our programs where we attempted to organize the communities, the black community in particular, so that we could create what was destroyed through our slavery so many years ago — the comprehensive collection of institutions that we call community. We wanted to establish this and we had to treat the issues that the people were most